

James B. Wright

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Partner Emeritus

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Areas of Practice & Industry Specialties

Litigation; Alternative Lenders



James B. Wright is a Shareholder in the firm's Litigation Practice Group and a co-founder of Buchalter's San Francisco office, of which he is a former Managing Partner. He has also been a member of the firm's Board of Directors and is a former General Counsel of the firm. He is presently an Associate General Counsel as well as a full-time business litigator.

Mr. Wright's practice emphasizes commercial, general business, real estate and financial institutions litigation involving bench and jury trials. He has extensive litigation and trial experience in both jury and non-jury matters based upon 46 years practicing law in all of the state and federal courts in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has engaged in extensive alternate dispute resolution proceedings, including binding arbitration and mediation, in which he has used creative negotiating and trial skills to bring successful resolution to his clients' matters.

Complex Business Litigation Jury Trials

- January – February 2019 – *Golden Gateway Center, L.P. v. San Francisco Waterfront Partners II, LLC*, San Francisco Superior Court. Seven-week jury trial defending fraud and rescission claims in a complex real estate option purchase transaction. Waterfront's cross complaint sought \$90+ million in fraud damages against client, Gateway. After one day of deliberations, the jury rendered a verdict for Gateway on fraud and rescission claims. The trial court thereafter directed a verdict for Gateway on Waterfront's remaining claims and awarded Gateway \$9.2 million in prevailing party fees and costs.
- 2007 – *Rodriguez v. Ameriquest Mortgage Company*, Pima County Superior Court, Arizona. Two-week jury trial seeking \$20 million against mortgage lender for alleged fraud. Jury verdict limited to fraction of damages sought, followed by a settlement for substantially less than verdict amount and settlement of a dozen other borrower claims.
- 1997 – *Abraham v. Bank of America*, United States District Court, Northern District of California, Case No. C-94-3076 CAL. Three-week federal jury trial for breach of fiduciary duty seeking \$120 million. Defense verdict for Bank of America.
- 1991 – *Sosnowski v. Bellevue Corporation*, Sonoma County Superior Court. Three-month jury trial involving multi-million dollar fraud and conspiracy claims against lender clients. Nonsuit for clients after jury verdict. Judgment for clients unanimously affirmed on appeal.

Published Decisions

- *California Corporate Center Acquisition, LLC, vs. KCM Investment Advisors, LLC*, 2017 Cal. Super. LEXIS 1294 (2017)
- *Hisamatsu v. Niroula and Bank of Hawaii*, 407 Fed. Appx. 109 (9th Cir. 2010) [2010 BL 304504]
- *Grafton Partners v. Superior Court*, 36 Cal.4th 944 (2005)
- *Espresso Roma Corp. v. Bank of America*, 100 Cal.App.4th 525 (2002), 48 UCC Rep. Serv.2d 265,

(2002)

- *Abraham v. Bank of America*, 1999 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 23052 (N.D. Cal. August 9, 1999)
- *First State Ins. Co. v. Callan Associates, Inc.*, 914 F.Supp. 369 (N.D. Cal. 1996)
- *Ford Motor Co. v. Superior Court*, 35 Cal.App.4th 997 (1995)
- *Bank of America v. Salinas Nissan, Inc.*, 207 Cal.App.3d 260 (1989)

Mr. Wright has been recognized as a Northern California Super Lawyer since 2011, is rated "AV Preeminent" by *Martindale Hubbell*, and was selected as a Top Rated Lawyer in the areas of Bank & Finance and Commercial Litigation by *American Lawyer Media*. He is a member of the Board of Directors of AIMRRG, a non-profit professional liability insurer, for which he chairs the Professional Responsibility and Risk Management subcommittee of the board.

Publications

- California Supreme Court Eliminates Lender Defense to Borrower Fraud Claims, *Buchalter Nemer Lender Alert*, January 2013

Presentations

- Speaker, "Guaranty Defenses," Special Assets Management Association's Annual Conference in Santa Barbara, CA, April 18, 2013
- Moderator, "Dos and Don'ts of Lender Liability," Special Assets Management Association Luncheon, March 1, 2012

Education

Mr. Wright earned his J.D. *cum laude* at the University Of San Francisco School Of Law in 1974; he received his B.A. with *high honors* at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1971. Following graduation from law school, he clerked for the Honorable Ira A. Brown, Jr. in the Law and Motion Department of the San Francisco Superior Court. Thereafter, he practiced business litigation as an associate with Dinkelspiel & Dinkelspiel in San Francisco before joining Buchalter, Nemer, Fields, Chrystie & Younger and co-founding its San Francisco office in 1981. Mr. Wright was elected a Buchalter shareholder in 1984.

Bar Admissions

- California

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of the United States
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California